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Subj: German reactions to rumored shifts in Western policy.

Despite public assertions that Federal Republic has complete confidence in U.S. and is officially informed that no changes in Western policy toward Germany under consideration, strong undercurrent of general uneasiness has recently developed. Prominent German officials and press have thought it necessary to issue sharp warnings about prospective danger of any softening of Western policy, making particular reference to reports that recognition East Germany, acceptance Oder-Neisse line and denial nuclear weapons to Wunderjahr may be under consideration.

Intensity and vehemence of reaction to these possibilities, even though they have no official sanction, may be taken as first indication extent to which U.S. should reckon with difficult problem of relations within Alliance. Fact such prominent individuals as Strauss, Majonica and Government's press spokesmen have found it necessary to make detailed, critical comments about effects of any "softening" of Western policy is fair indication depth and gravity of German reaction. Not without significance that key Foreign Office official, von Ihse, privately voiced regret that Western Foreign Ministers meeting could not be called before meeting October 6 between President Kennedy and Soviet Foreign Minister Gromyko. It appears clear that difficult negotiations within Western Alliance, as pointed out editorially in Die Welt October 5, must be anticipated before any substantive negotiations with USSR can begin.

Even though press carries assertions that no hard evidence of a change in American policy exists, editorially, newspapers seem to be convinced that facts are otherwise. For example, Sebastian Laffner, in widely noted article in Die Welt October 3 claimed even sparrows on housetops in Washington know that there is new American policy. Below level of reputable press much more insidious version of emerging American policy is being spread through various news sheets which are widely read in influential political circles.

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Extent and depth current German reaction, particularly in absence of any official confirmation of prospective changes in Western policy, suggests desirability of giving urgent consideration to way in which the Germans may best be approached. If changes in established policy contemplated, preparatory steps may be required to determine what changes may be acceptable to Federal Republic, extent to which it may be persuaded to make certain sacrifices, and price it may feel required to exact for its contribution to evolution of different Western position for negotiation with USSR.

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Basically, official German position on possible Western concessions in relation to Berlin is that such concessions would settle nothing, but would precipitate new crises. In its most primitive form German theory is capitulation in Germany and East Berlin. Such possibilities as recognition of East Germany, acceptance of the Oder-Neisse line, limitation of arms on German soil, according to German reasoning, would either involve actual breaches of treaty obligations or abandonment of established Western policies with respect to ultimate German reunification and integrity of NATO, effects of which would be to affect German morale adversely and to weaken Western Alliance. One prominent columnist went so far as to argue that if such policies were actually implemented, Federal Republic would be faced with choice of neutralism, reconstituted Western Alliance, or tight Western European grouping outside NATO. Prospect of such policies pushing Germany toward a neutral policy is discounted at present.

At least two distinct lines of thought exist. On official level, government spokesmen insist Washington's policy unchanged. Unofficially, most German opinion, including many elements in Foreign Office, is that American policy has, in fact, already changed and that problem for Federal Republic is how best to cope with changes and to bring its influence to bear in such ways as to insure minimum damage, and perforce, minimum change. Widespread recognition exists that large segment of American opinion, which enjoys influential representation in Congress, Fulbright, Humphrey, Hall, Taft, and is often reflected in press (Lippman), favors change in existing policies, including substantial concessions, in order to obtain a settlement in Berlin. Hope remains, however, that by judicious use of German influence Federal Republic can undertake actions whose effect will be to bolster existing American policies and continue policy consistent with past principles and in harmony with fundamental interests of US and Federal Republic. No German source yet ventured to predict effect of substantial American concessions except in sense it would be detrimental and lead in directions contrary to existing policy.

Embassy considers that uneasiness and uncertainty in influential political circles within the Federal Republic genuine and strikes deeper than any time since the beginning of Berlin crisis in 1953. Possible development anti-American feeling, particularly if rumored American intentions to make East Germans regard as substantial concessions to USSR become fact, cannot be discounted, although no doubt that threat of anti-Americanism would also be exploited in Federal Republic's search for means of bringing influence to bear on US. Although mass circulation newspapers have featured such dramatic headlines as "Is Germany Going to be Sold Out?", public at large is apparently not yet deeply aroused, with possible exception refugee circles.

Recent statements by General Clay and Senators Humphrey and Fulbright suggesting policy of certain concessions in interests of maintaining peace and reflecting certain changes about reliability of Germany have received prominent play in German press and on radio and television. Effect of these stories has been to arouse far greater German interest over future course of American policy than current domestic political situation in which efforts are still continuing to form a government.